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HANDS ON p24

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ISSUE 03 VOL. 2

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MAXIMO: GHOSTS TO GLORY 10

- The Simpsons: Road Rage 62
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3. 91
- Twisted Metal: Small Brawl 66
- Wave Race 75
- WWF Smackdown!: Just Bring It 52

32 INCOMING

A Look at What's Around the Corner

- The Legend of Alon D'ar 32
- Grandia II 34
- Kingdom Hearts 38
- Rez. 36
- Star Wars: Obi Wan 40

94 TRICKS NOW

Tons of Cheats, Codes and Tips

- Castlevania: Chronicles. 94
- Final Fight One 96
- Grand Theft Auto 3 94
- Men in Black: The Series 95
- NHL 2002. 94
- NHL Hitz 20-02. 97
- Ooga Booga 95
- Pac-Man Collection 96
- Power Rangers: Time Force 95
- Spider-Man: Mysterio's Menace 96
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3. 95
- X-Men: Mutant Academy 2 96

24 HANDS ON

Handheld News, Reviews and Previews

Reviews

Wario Land 4. 24
Golden Sun 28
Doom GBA 26

Previews

Broken Sword: The Shadow of Templars . . 30
Sheep 30
Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction 30

114 FAN CLUB

Letters, Fan Art and Instant Messaging

Welcome/Index . . . 114
Letters 114
Oddball LOTM 115
Rants 'n' Raves . . . 116
Fan Challenge 116
Robot Contest 117
Fan Art 118
GameNOW Crew . . 118
Opinion Poll 118

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Contains Suggestive Themes, Mild Or Strong Language And Animated Violence. Some Parents May Want To Supervise Children Playing T-Rated Games.

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These Games Contain More Adult Themes, Such As Blood And Gore, Stronger Language And Sexual Themes. Deemed Not Suitable For Those Under 17.

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The Extreme Of The Ratings, Suitable For Adults Only. Packs Sexual Themes And Extreme Violence. Console Manufacturers Have Yet To Allow An AO-Rated Game.

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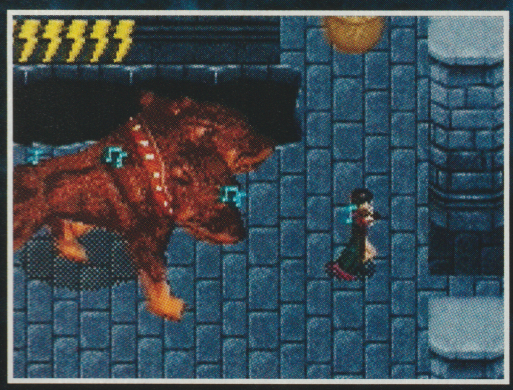
Harry Potter



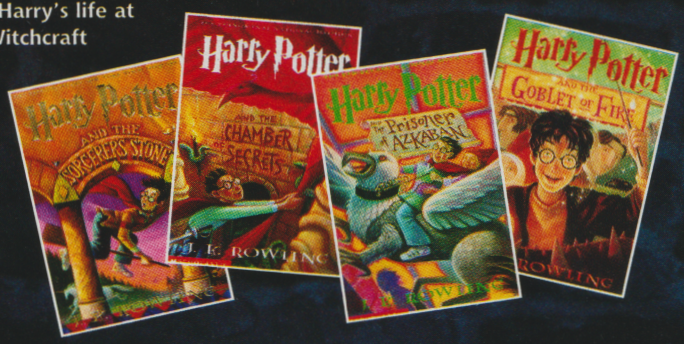
By Shane Bettenhausen

Introduction

Everyone knows who Harry Potter is. The wizarding world considers him a veritable celebrity! He's the "Boy Who Lived," the only person to have ever survived a battle with He-Who-Should-Not-Be-Named (aka Dark Lord Voldemort). Up until now, his exploits have been limited the to the pages of J.K. Rowling's wildly popular books. More than 100 million Harry Potter novels have charmed countless fans across the world. He's been a keen poster boy for the fun of reading, but his creators and fans knew that he was destined for even more stardom. Now, you'll find Harry nearly everywhere—in a major motion picture, three different video games, on toy shelves and even in 12-packs of Coke. For Harry Potter fans and newcomers alike, Potter-mania has reached critical mass. This handy guide will take you on a magical tour of all things Harry Potter. Muggles (i.e. people who can't perform magic) can use this primer to familiarize themselves with the complex world of wizards. Dedicated Potter freaks should take a look, too, as they'll find out some cool info about the future of the Harry Potter series...

The Books

In 1997, J.K. Rowling released her first book ever, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (not bad for a first try, eh?). It garnered good reviews and quickly became a sensation as positive word of mouth spread. Rowling's plans for the series were firmly outlined. She would write seven Harry Potter books, each one covering one year of Harry's life at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. So far, four books have been released: *Sorcerer's Stone*, *Chamber of Secrets*, *Prisoner of Azkaban* and *Goblet of Fire*. Each successive novel has been longer, grander and more popular than the one before it. In fact, the fourth book is the fastest-selling book ever, moving 3 million copies in 48 hours. Although technically children's books, these irresistible titles rock the socks off of kids, teens, adults and even grandma. Read 'em and you'll be glad that you did.



The Movie

Warner Bros. Pictures' $125 Million adaptation exploded into theaters across the world on November 16th. The film opened on more than 8,200 screens, over twice as many as the former opening champion, *Mission: Impossible 2*. That means that one out of every four movie screens in the US was showing *Harry Potter* that weekend. Does the movie faithfully recreate the magic of the book? Here's what three of our editors think of Harry's big-screen debut.

SHANE'S TAKE ON THE FILM

The *Harry Potter* movie crams the vast storyline of the first book into an engrossing film. Sure, a few important scenes were scrapped (such as Hermione's potion-mixing triumph at the very end), but nearly everything made it in. Clocking in at 152 minutes, the film might be too long for young kids, but fans of the book will stay riveted to the screen. Overall, it's a fabulously accurate handling of the book that captures the magic and wonder of Rowling's creation. Potter-heads won't be surprised, but they'll definitely be entertained.

ETHAN'S TAKE ON THE FILM

This is arguably the best family film to arrive in theaters since *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971). Lavishly produced and perfectly paced, it's sure to stand the test of time beautifully—kids who see it today will probably share this film with their own children 20 or 30 years from now. Let's hope the other films will be of this caliber.

PHIL'S TAKE ON THE FILM

I've been a big fan of the *Harry* books for quite some time now, and I've been looking forward to the movie for ages. I was kinda upset that some scenes were altered (how the kids got past Fluffy) or left out (getting Hagrid's dragon, Norbert, out of Hogwarts; the character Peeves), but I suppose that if they didn't, the movie would have been twice as long. It's still an incredible movie, though, and it's bound to be a classic. Now, just give me an extra-packed DVD.

The Characters of Sorcerer's Stone

HARRY POTTER

Harry's wizard parents were killed when he was only a baby. His muggle aunt and uncle raise Harry until he is 11, when an acceptance letter from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry changes his life forever.

RON WEASLEY

This redheaded chap quickly befriends Harry at Hogwarts. Since three of his brothers also attend Hogwarts, Ron must make do with hand-me-downs. What he lacks in money, though, he makes up with loyalty and bravery.

HERMIONE GRANGER

You know the girl who shoots her hand into the air whenever the teacher asks a question? That's Hermione. She's a stickler for the rules, but she tries to keep Ron and Harry from getting in trouble.

REBUS HAGRID

The burly gameskeeper at Hogwarts might look menacing, but he's really a softie. Hagrid's kind to all animals, and he's a close friend of Harry and his friends. Incidentally, his cooking is nearly as dangerous as his pets...

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE

Hogwarts' esteemed headmaster commands the respect of his students with his wisdom and compassion. Although he's one of the most powerful wizards in the world,, he's like the kindly grandpa that Harry never had.

DRACO MALFOY

This shifty student quickly becomes Harry's rival at Hogwarts. Malfoy and his thuggish pals are constantly terrorizing Harry and his friends, and his cruel remarks about Ron and Hermione's families infuriate Harry.

LORD VOLDEMORT

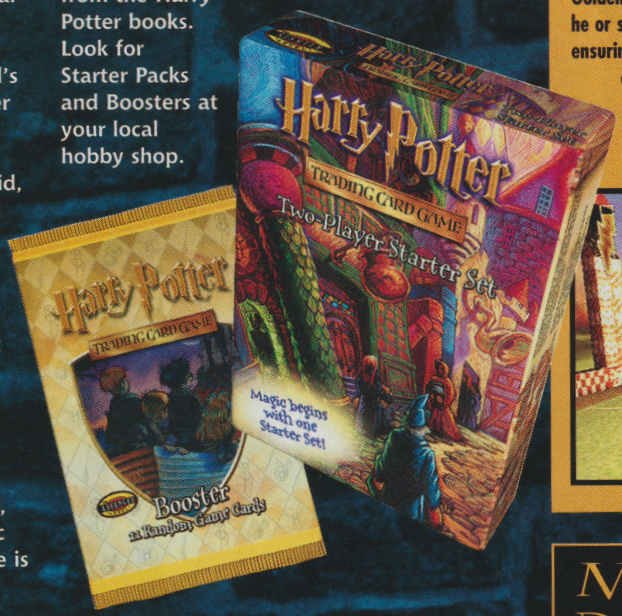
Wizards refuse to speak the name of this vile warlock. His murderous rampage was halted 11 years ago, when he failed to kill the infant Harry Potter. Be careful not to speak his name out loud!

The Merchandise

In addition to the PlayStation, Game Boy Advance and Game Boy Color games we already reviewed, a treasure trove of cool Harry Potter stuff will grace store shelves this holiday season. Aspiring wizards with speedy PCs should investigate EA's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* computer game. It's totally different than the other three games, and it sports the best looking visuals of the four.

Kids and collectors (who are really just kids that never grew up) will want Mattel's new Harry Potter action figures. You'll find Ron, Hermione, Hagrid, Malfoy, Fluffy, a Troll and several different versions of Harry on store shelves right now. However, you might have trouble finding the figures of Dumbledore, Professor Quirrell and Remembrall Malfoy, as these three are only being produced in strictly limited quantities. Other HP toys include Lego sets, board games, potion kits and well, about a million other things. Be specific with your Xmas lists. Santa's warehouse is likely bursting with all this magical merchandise.

Remember the Pokémon card craze of a few years back? Yeah, of course you do. You traded your lunch for that Charizard, remember? Well, the company behind that addiction also makes a Harry Potter collectible card game, and countless fans have already fallen under its spell. It plays a lot like Magic and Pokémon, but features characters, locations and spells from the Harry Potter books. Look for Starter Packs and Boosters at your local hobby shop.



The Future of Harry Potter

Potter-mania is currently in full swing, but it's never going to stop! Harry's fame will continue to extend in 2002, when a bunch of cool new HP stuff hits stores. First and foremost, the long-awaited fifth novel, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, should ship in July. Diehard fans will surely camp out all night to be the first on their block to read about Harry's fifth year at Hogwarts. Will he win the Quidditch cup? Probably. Will he hook up with a girl? We hope so.

The second Harry Potter film, *Chamber of Secrets*, will be released on November 15, 2002. It's filming right now in the UK. EA hasn't officially announced information about games based on it, but we heard from a little owl that versions for the Game Boy Advance, PlayStation 2, GameCube and Xbox are all likely. Of course, the saga of Harry Potter doesn't even end there. More films will follow on a yearly basis, as well as the final two books and countless great games. This is only the beginning.

Quidditch, the Wizards' Sport

WIZARDS AREN'T ALL JUST BOOKWORMS

They enjoy sports as much as we muggles—it's just that their sport is well, a bit more magical. Quidditch is blend of rugby and cricket that's played on flying broomsticks. Each team has seven members that must contend with four different kinds of balls. It's all rather complex, but Harry's job as the team's Seeker is quite simple—he must catch the Golden Snitch. If a team's Seeker snags the Snitch, he or she scores a cool 150 points for their team, ensuring a victory. The Quidditch scene in the film is one of the most spectacular, and both the GBA and PlayStation games do a great job of simulating this unique game.

Magically Delicious Treats

BERTIE BOTT'S EVERY-FLAVOR BEANS

These may look like normal jelly beans to a casual observer, but Wizards know the secret of this classic candy. Bertie Bott's Beans come in every possible flavor. If you're lucky, you may get toffee, strawberry or peppermint. Of course, you might end up with spinach, earwax or vomit.

CHOCOLATE FROGS

The tasty frog made of chocolate is only part of the appeal. In each package, you'll find a highly collectible Famous Witches and Wizards card. These cards depict famous magic users from history, and most Hogwarts students collect and trade them.

PUMPKIN PASTY

Most Americans have no clue what this British confection is. Basically, it's a flaky pastry filled with pumpkin pie filling. There's nothing magical about it, but it sure warms up those cold nights at Hogwarts.